

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. Operating mode indicator apparatus for a computer-pointing device, comprising:
5 a first illumination apparatus operatively associated with the computer-pointing device, said first illuminating apparatus generating light when the computer-pointing device is in a first operating mode; and
a second illumination apparatus operatively associated with the computer-pointing device, said second illumination apparatus generating light when the computer-pointing device is in a second operating mode.

2. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, wherein the computer-pointing device comprises a mouse.

3. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first illumination apparatus comprises a light-emitting diode, and wherein said second illumination apparatus comprises a light-emitting diode.

4. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first illumination apparatus generates light having at least one attribute different than the light generated by said second illumination apparatus.

5. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first illumination apparatus generates light when the computer-pointing device is not being moved, and wherein said second illumination apparatus generates light when the computer-pointing device is being moved.

6. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a third illumination apparatus operatively associated with the computer-pointing device, said third illumination apparatus generating light when the computer-pointing device is in a third operating mode.

7. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 6, wherein said first illumination apparatus generates light when the computer-pointing device is not in contact with a user, wherein said second illumination apparatus generates light when the computer-pointing device is being moved, and wherein said third illumination apparatus generates light when the computer-pointing device is in contact with the user but the computer-pointing device is not being moved.

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8. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a switch, said switch allowing a user to disable the operating mode indicator apparatus.

9. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a time-delayed shut off switch, said time-delayed shut off switch causing the operating mode indicator apparatus to be shut off after a period of inactivity.

10. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a user detection device operatively associated with the computer-pointing device, said user detection device detecting when a user is accessing the computer-pointing device.

11. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 10, wherein said user detection device comprises an optical sensor.

12. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 10, wherein said user detection device comprises a thermal sensor.

13. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 10, wherein said user detection device comprises a mechanically activated switch.

14. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 10, wherein said user detection device comprises a capacitance proximity sensor.

15. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a data processing system operatively associated with the computer-pointing device, said data processing system receiving a data signal from the computer-pointing device that is indicative of the operating mode of the computer-pointing device, said data processing system processing the data signal so that said first illumination apparatus generates light when the computer-pointing device is in the first operating mode and so that said second illumination apparatus generates light when the computer-pointing device is in the second operating mode.

16. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a control system, said control system actuating said first illumination apparatus when the computer-pointing device is in the first operating mode, said control system actuating said second illumination apparatus when the computer-pointing device is in the second operating mode.

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17. The operating mode indicator apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first illumination apparatus and said second illumination apparatus comprise a single illumination apparatus.

18. A method for indicating an operating mode of a computer-pointing device, comprising:

5 providing the computer-pointing device with a first illumination apparatus and a second illumination apparatus;

determining whether the computer-pointing device is in a first operating mode;

10 illuminating said first illumination apparatus if it is determined that the computer-pointing device is in the first operating mode;

determining whether the computer-pointing device is in a second operating mode; and

15 illuminating said second illumination apparatus if it is determined that the computer-pointing device is in the second operating mode.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

providing the computer-pointing device with a third illumination apparatus;

5 determining whether the computer-pointing device is in a third operating mode; and

illuminating said third illumination apparatus if it is determined that the computer-pointing device is in the third operating mode.

20. Operating mode indicator apparatus for a computer-pointing device, comprising:

means for indicating that the computer-pointing device is in a first operating mode; and

5 means for indicating that the computer-pointing device is in a second operating mode.

21. A computer-pointing device, comprising:

a cursor movement control device, said cursor movement control device allowing a user to move a cursor on display apparatus operatively associated with the computer-pointing device;

5 a first illumination apparatus, said first illumination apparatus

generating light when the computer-pointing device is in a first operating mode; and

a second illumination apparatus, said second illumination apparatus generating light when the computer-pointing device is in a second operating mode.

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